

CHAPTER XXX

HE next morning a royal mqssenger came to Count Marlanx. He bore two sealed letters from the princess. One briefly Informed him that General Braze' was his successor as commander in chief of the army of Graustark. He hesitated long before opening the other. It was equally brief and to the point. The Iron Count's teeth came together with a savage snap as he read the signature of the princess at the end. There was no recourse. She had struck for Beverly Calhoun. He looked at his watch. It was 11 o'clock. The edict gave him twenty-four hours from the noon of that day. The gray old libertine dispatched a messenger for his man of affairs, a lawyer of high standing in Edelweiss. Together they consulted until midnight. Shortly after daybreak the morning following Count Marianx was in the train for Vienna, never to set foot on Granstark's soil again. He was banished and his estates confiscated by the government.

The ministry in Edelweiss was not slow to reopen negotiations with Dawsbergen A proclamation was sent to the prime minister setting forth the new order of affairs and suggesting the instant suspension of hostile preparations and the restoration of Prince Dantan. Accompanying this proclamation went a dignified message from Dantas informing his people that he awaited their commands. He was ready to resume the throne that had been so desecrated. It would be his joy to restore Dawsbergen to its once penceful and prosperous condition. In the meantime the Duke of Mizrox dispatched the news to the Princess Volga of Axphain, who was forced to abandon-temporarily at least-her desperture of Gabriel put an end to her transparent plans.

"But she is bound to break out against us sooner or later and on the slightest provocation." said Yetive. "I dare say that a friendly alliance

between Graustark and Dawsbergen

will prove sufficient to check any am-

bitions she may have along that line," said Ravone significantly. "They are very near to each other now, your highness. Friends should stand together." Beverly Calhoun was in suspense. Baldos had been sent off to the frontier by Prince Dantan, carrying the message which could be trusted to no other. He accompanied the Granstark ambassadors of peace as Dantan's special agent. He went in the nighttime, and Beverly did not see him. The week which followed his departure was the longest she ever spent. She was troubled in her heart for fear that he might not return, despite the declaration she had made to him in one hysterical moment. It was difficult for her to keep up the show of cheerfulness that was expected of her. Reticence became her stronges characteristic. She persistently refused to be drawn into a discussion of her relations with the absent one. Yetive was piqued by her manner at first, but wisely saw through the mask as time went on. She and Prince Dantan had many quiet and interesting chats concerning Beverly and the erstwhile guard. The prince took Lorry and the

Beverly and the young Princess Can dace became fast and loving friends. The young girl's worship of her brother was beautiful to behold. She huddled close to him on every occasion, and her dark eyes bespoke adoration whenever his name was mentioned in her presence.

princess into his confidence. He told

them all there was to tell about his

dashing friend and companion.

"If he doesn't come back pretty soon I'll pack up and start for home," Beyerly said to herself resentfully one day. "Then if he wants to see me he'll have to come all the way to Washin'ton, and I'm not sure that he can do it, either. He's too disgustingly poor."

"Wha's became o' dat Misteh Baldos, Miss Bev'ly?" asked Aunt Fanny in the midst of these sorry cogitations. "Has he tuck lift int' his hald to desert us fo' good? Seems to me he'd oughteh"-

"Now, that will do, Aunt Fanny," reprimended her mistress sternly. 'You are not supposed to know anything about affairs of state, so don't

At last she no longer could curb her impatience and auxiety. She deliberately sought information from Prince Dantan. They were strolling in the park on the seventh day of her in-

"Have you heard from Paul Baldos?" she asked, bravely plunging into deep

"He is expected here tomorrow or the next day, Miss Calhoun. I am almost as eager to see him as you are," he replied, with a very pointed smile.

"Almost? Well, yes, I'll confess that I am eager to see him. I never knew I could long for any one as much as - Oh, well, there's no use hiding it from you. I couldn't if I tried. I care very much for him. You don't think it sounds silly for me to say such a thing, do you'l I've thought a great deal of him ever since the night at the Inn of the Hawk and Raven. In my imagination I have tried to strip you of your princely robes to place them upon him, but he is only Buldos in spite of it all. He knows that I care for him, and I know that he cares for me. Per

haps he has told you." "Yes, he has confessed that he loves you, Miss Calhoun, and he laments the fact that his love seems hopeless. Paul wonders in his heart if it would be right in him to ask you to give up all you have of wealth and pleasure to share a humble lot with him." "I love him. Isn't that enough?

But," and she pursed her mouth in pathetic despair, "don't you think that you can make a noble or something of him and give him a station in life worthy of his ambitions? He has done

so much for you, you know." "I have nothing that I can give to him, he says. Paul Baldos asks only that he may be my champion until these negotiations are ended. Then he desires to be free to serve whom he will. All that I can do is to let him have his way. He is a free lance, and he asks no favors, no help

"Well, I think he's perfectly ridiculous about it, don't you? And yet that is the very thing I like in him. I am only wondering how we-I mean, how he is going to live, that's all."

"If I am correctly informed he still has several months to serve in the service for which he enlisted. You slone. I believe, have the power to discharge him before his term expires," said he meaningly.

That night Baldos returned to Edelweiss, ahead of the Graustark delegation which was coming the next day with representatives from Dawsber He brought the most glorious gen. news from the frontier. The Duke of Matz and the leading dignitaries had heard of Gabriel's capture, both through the Bappo boys and through a few of his henchmen who had staggered into camp after the disaster. The news threw the Dawsbergen diplomats into a deplorable state of uncertainty. Even the men high in authority, while not especially depressed over the fall of their, sovereign, were in doubt as to what would be the next move in their series of tragedies. Almost to a man they regretted the folly which had drawn them into the net with Gabriel. Baldos reported that the Duke of Matz and a dozen of the most distinguished men in Dawsbergen were on their way ate designs upon Graustack. The cap- to Edelweiss to complete arrangements for peace and to lay their renunciation of Gabriel before Dantan in a neutral

The people of Dawsbergen had been clamoring long for Dantan's restoration, and Baldos was commissioned to say that his return would be the signal for great rejoicing. He was closeted until after midnight with Dantan and his sister, Lorry and Princess Yetive being called in at the end to hear and approve of the manifesto prepared by the Prince of Dawsbergen. The next morning the word went forth that a great banquet was to be given in the castle that night for Prince Dantan and the approaching noblemen. The prince expected to depart almost immediately thereafter to resume the

throne in Serros. Baldos was wandering through the park early in the morning. His duties rested lightly upon his shoulders, but he was restless and dissatisfied. The longing in his heart urged him to turn his eyes ever and anon toward the balcony and then to the obstinate looking castle doors. The uniform of a Graustark guard still graced his splendid figure. At last a graceful form was seen coming from the castle toward the cedars. She walked bravely, but nimlessly. That was plain to be seen. It was evident that she was and was not looking for some one. Baldos observed with a thrill of delight that a certain red feather stood up defiantly from the band of her sailor hat. He liked the way her dark blue walking skirt swished in barmony with her lithe, firm strides.

She was quite near before he advanc ed from his place among the trees. He did not expect her to exhibit surprise or confusion, and he was not disappointed. She was as cool as a brisk spring morning. He did not offer his hand, but, with a fine smile of coutentment, bowed low and with mock

"I report for duty, your highness. he said. She caught the ring of gladness in his voice.

"Then I command you to shake hands with me," she said brightly. "You have been away, I believe?" with a delicious inflection.

"Yes, for a century or more, I'u sure." Constraint fell upon them suddenly. The hour had come for a defi nite understanding, and both were con quered by its importance. For the first time in his life he knew the meaning of diffidence. It came over him as he looked helplessly into the clear, gray earnest eyes. "I love you for wearing that red feather," he said simply. "And I loved you for wearing it.

she answered, her voice soft and thrill ing. He caught his breath joyously. "Beverly," as he bent over her, "you are my very life, my"-

"Don't, Pauli" she whispered, draw ing away, with an outleavmental stance about the parts. There were poorle to soon on all stites, but he had forest ten them. He thought mile of the airt who mied his heart. Pooling the pain in his face, the heatily, even blushingsaid, "It is so publis, donp."

He straightened himself with nathier ly precision, but his voice trembled as he tried to speak calmiy in defiance to his eyes. "There is the gratta see! It is sechusion inself. Will you come with me? I must tell you all that is in my heart. It will burst if I do not."

Blandy they made their way to the fairy grotte deep in the thicket of trees. It was Yetive's favorite dreaming place. Dark and soot and intralest with the rippling of waters, it was an ideal retreat. She dropped upon the runtle bench that stood against the moss covered wall of bowlders. With the gentle reserve of a man who reveres as well as loves. Haldes stood above her. He waited, and the understood. How unlike most impaticut lovers he west

"You may sit beside me," she said. with a wistful smile of acknowledge ment. As he flux himself into the seat his hand enserly sought here, his There is no wealth so great as that. courtly reserve Ross to the winds,

know how much I love you," he whispered into her ear. "It is a deathless love, unconquerable, unalterable. It is in my blood to love forever. Listen to grotto. me, dear one. I come of a race whose love is hot and enduring. My people no other people have loved. They have to leave the bower behind, killed and slaughtered for the sake of the glorious passion. Love is the religion of my people. You must, you shall believe me when I say that I will love you better than my soul so long as that soul exists. I loved you the day I met you. It has been worship

His passion carried her resistlessly away as the great waves sweep the deck of a ship at sea. She was out in self." the ocean of love, far from all else that was dear to her, far from all harbors save the mysterious one to which his passion was piloting her through a storm of emotion.

"I have longed so to hold you in my arms, Beverly. Even when you were a princess and I lay in the hospital at Ganlook my fevered arms hungered for you. There never has been a moment that my heart has not been reaching out in search of yours. You have glorified me, dearest, by the promise you made a week ago. I know that you will not renounce that precious pledge. It is in your eyes now-the eyes I shall worship to the end of eternity. Tell me, though, with your own lips, your own voice, that you will be my wife, mine to hold forever."

about his neck and buried her face against his shoulder. There were tears in her gray eyes and there was a sob in her throat. He held her close to his breast for an eternity, it seemed to their hearts were singing. There was no other world than the fairy grotto. "Sweetheart, I am asking you to make a great sacrifice." he said at last, his voice hearse but tender. She looked up into his face serenely. "Can

you give up the joys, the wealth, the comforts of that home across the sea known. It will be poverty and the dregs, not riches and wine. It will

But she placed her hand upon his The picture he was painting was the same one that she had studied for days and days. Its very shadow was facorner was as plain as day.

"The rest of the world may think are poor? Or would you have me go light. up the ladder of fame and prosperity always be poor. They may say what well, because I am not a fool. It is in this subtle flortery. the American girl who marries the nounced. He gasped with unbelief.

"You have, already?" he cried. "Of course. My mind has been made ing splendor of the east. up for more than a week. I told it to | Prince Dantan joined the throng just Aunt Fanny last night.

"And she?" She almost died, that's all," said she unblushingly. "I was afraid to cable the news to ther. He might stop me if he knew it in time. A letter was much smarter."

"You dear, dear little sacrifice," he cried tenderly. "I will give all my life to make you happy."

'I am a soldier's daughter, and I can to give you up, Paul, but I couldn't. You are love's soldier, and it is a-a relief to surrender and have it over

They fell to discussing plans for the future. It all went smoothly and airlly until he asked her when he should go to Washington to claim her as his wife, She gave him a startled, puzzled look.

"To Washin'ton?" she murmured, turning very cold and weak. "Youyou won't have to go to Washin'ton, dear. I'll stay here."

"My dear Beverly, I can afford the trip," he laughed. "I am not an absolute pauper. Besides, it is right and just that your father should give you to me. It is the custom of our land."

She was nervous and uncertain. "But-but, Paul, there are many things to think of," she faltered. "You mean that your father would

not consent?" "Well-he he might be unreasonable," she stammered. "And then there are my brothers, Keith and Dan. They are foolishly interested in me. Dan thinks no one is good enough for me. So does Keith. And father, too, for that matter-and mother. You see, it's not just as if you were a grand and wealthy nobleman. They may not understand. We are southerners, you know. Some of them have peculiar ideas about"-

"Don't distress yourself so much, dearest," he said, with a laugh. "Though I see your position clearly-

and it is not an enviable one." "We can go to Washin'ton just as soon as we are married," she compromised. "Father has a great deal of influence over there. With his help behind you you will soon be a power in the United"- But his hearty laugh checked her eager plotting. "It's nothing to laugh at. Paul," she said.

"I beg your pardon a thousand times I was thinking of the disappointment I must give you now. I cannot live in the United States-never. My home is here. I am not born for the strife of your land. They have soldiers enough and better than I. It is in the turbulent east that we shall live-you and I." Tears came into her eyes.

"Am I not to-to go back to Washin'ton?" She tried to smile. "When Prince Dantan says

nerhaps. "Oh, he is my friend," she cried in great relief. "I can get any favor I ask of him. Oh, Paul, Paul, I know fool, but I can't help ! I shall let you

"Bevery, dearest one, you never can know that I intend to be a blissful one,

He kissed her time and again out there in the dark, soft light of the fairy

"Before we can be married, dearest, I have a journey of some importance from time immemorial have loved as to take," he announced as they arose

"A journey? Where?" "To Vienna. I have an account to settle with a man who has just taken up his residence there." His hand went to his sword hilt, and his dark eyes gleamed with the fire she loved. "Count Marlanx and I have postponed business to attend to, dearest. Have no fear for me. My sword is honest, and I shall bring it back to you my-

She shuddered and knew that it would be as he said.

CHAPTER XXXI. THE Duke of Matz and his assoclates reached Edelweiss in the afternoon. Their attendants and servants carried luggage bearing the princely crest of Dawsbergen and meant for Prince Dantan and his sister Candace. In the part of the castle set apart for the visitors an important consultation was held behind closed doors. There Dantan met his countrymen and permitted them to renew the pledge of fealty that had been shattered by the overpowering influence of his mad half brother. What took place at this secret meeting the outside world never knew. Only the happy result was made For answer she placed her arms known. Prince Dantan was to resume his reign over Dawsbergen as if it never had been interrupted.

The castle, brilliant from bottom top, filled with music and laughter, both, neither giving voice to the song experienced a riot of happiness such as it had not known in years. The war clouds had lifted, the sunshine of contentment was breaking through the darkness, and there was rejoleing in the hearts of all. Bright and glorious were the colors that made up the harmony of peace. Men and women of high degree came to the historic old to share a lowly cottage with me and | walls garbed in the riches of royalty my love? Wait, dear-do not speak and nobility. To Beverly Calhoun it until I am through. You must think of | was the most enchanting sight she had what your friends will say. The loval ever looked upon. From the galleries and life I offer you now will not be she gazed down into the halls glitterlike that which you always have ing with the wealth of Graustark and was conscious of a strange feeling of giorification. She felt that she had a dream to her. At last she heard Canlips, shaking her head emphatically, mingled with the resplendent crowd.

She was the center of attraction. Dressed in a simple, close fitting gown of black velvet, without an ornament, miliar to her, its every unwholesome her white arms and shoulders gleaming ant sister of Dantan. Ravone, at her in the soft light from the chandeliers, she was an entlying creature to be ad- him dizzlly. what it likes, Paul," she said, "It will mired by mer and women alike, Two make no difference to me. I have stalwart Americans felt their hearts awakened from my dream. My dream bound with pride as they saw the conprince is gone, and I find that it's the quest their countrywoman was makreal man that I love. What would you ing. Candace, her constant companion have me do? Give you up becase you in these days, was consumed with de-

"You are the prettiest thing in all with you, a humble but adoring bur- this world," she eestatically whispered | The friendship that binds me to Prince den? I know you, dear. You will not into Beverly's ear, "My brother says so, too," she added conclusively. Bevthey like. I have thought long and erly was too true a woman not to revel strengthened into a dearer relationship

The great banquet hall was to be titled foreigner without love that is a thrown open at midnight. There were fool. Marrying a poor man is too seri- dancing and song during the hours ous a business to be handled by fools. leading up to this important event. I have written to my father, telling him | Reverly was entranced. She had seen that I am going to marry you." she an- brilliant affairs at home, but none of them compared to this in regal splendor. It was the sensuous, overpower-

before midnight. He made his way direct to the little circle of which Beverly and Candace formed the center. His rich, full military costume gave him a new distinction that quite overcame Beverly. They fell into an animated conversation, exchanging shafts of wit that greatly amused those who

could understand the language. "You must remember," Beverly said in reply to one of Ravone's sallies, he a soldier's wife. I have tried hard "that Americans are not in the least awed by Europe's greatness. It has come to the pass when we call Europe our playground. We now go to Europe as we go to the circus or the county fair at home. It isn't much more trouble, you know, and we must

"Alas, poor Europe!" he laughed. As he strolled about with her and Candace he pointed out certain men to her, asking her to tax her memory in the effort to recall their faces if not their apparel. She readily recognized in the lean, tired faces the men she had met first at the Inn of the Hawk and Ra-

"They were vagabonds then, Miss Calhoun. Now they are noblemen.

Does the transition startle you?" "Isn't Baldos among them?" she asked, volcing the query that had been uppermost in her mind since the moment when she looked down from the galleries and failed to see him. She was wondering how he would appear

in court costume. "You forget that Baldos is only guard," he said kindly.

"He is a courtier nevertheless," she retorted.

She was vaguely disappointed be cause he was missing from the scene of splendor. It proved to her that caste overcame all else in the rock ribbed east. The common man, no matter how valiant, had no place in such affairs as these. Her pride was suffering. She was as a queen among the noblest of the realm. As the wife of Baldos she would live in another world-on the outskirts of this one of splendor and arrogance. A stubborn, defiant little frown appeared on her brow as she pictured herself in her mind's eye standing afar off with "the man" Baldos, looking at the opulence she could not reach. Her impetuous, rebellious little heart was thumping bitterly as she considered this single phase of the life to come. She was ready to cry out against the injustice of it all. The little frown was portentous of deep laid designs. would break down this cruel barrier that kept Baldos from the fields over which prejudice alone held sway. Her love for him and her determination to be his wife were not in the least dulled by these reflections.

The doors to the great banquet hall were thrown open at last, and in the disorder that followed she wondered who was to lead her to the feasting. that my folks will think I'm an arful The Duke of Mizrox claimed the Prin-

one at her side, and the voice was the the words. The speaker was the man Prince Dantan himself.

Bewildered, her heart palpitating

with various emotions, she took his arm and allowed berself to be drawn wonderingly through the massive doors. As they entered, followed by the brilliant company, the superb orchestra that Beverly had so often enjoyed began to play the stirring "Hands Across the Sea." The musiclans themselves seemed to have caught the universal feeling of lov and mirth that was in the air and played as if inspired, their leader bowing low to the young American girl as she passed. It was his affectionate tribute the banquet hall to the head of the royal table, gorgeous with the plate of her on his left and next to the slightly raised royal chairs. Candace was on stead." his right, the picture of happiness Beverly felt dizzy, weak. She looked helplessly at Prince Dantan. His smile was puzzling. As if in a daze she saw had sustained was swept into a heap Grenfall Lorry with the Countess Yvonne standing exactly opposite to ing. her, he, with the others, awaiting the appearance of the princess and the one who was to sit beside her,

The music censed, there was a hush over the room, and then Yetive came robes, smiling and happy. A tall man in the uniform of an exalted army officer stood beside her, gold braid and bejeweled things across his breast. Bevstiffened and then relaxed.

It was Baldos! She never knew how she dropped into the chair the servant held for her She only knew that his dark eyes were smiling at her with love and mischief in their depths. There was a vague uncertain sound of chattering; some one was talking eagerly to her, but she toast to the Prince of Dawsbergen.
Then the audacious ghost of Baidos was proposing a ringing response to the Princess Yetive; the orchestra was playing the Graustark and Dawsbergen national hymns. But it was all as a part in this jubilee. With Caudace she dace calling to her, her face wreathed descended the grand staircase and in smiles. Scores of eyes seemed to be looking at her, and all of them were full of amusement.

"Now, say that a girl can't keep a secret," came to her ears from the radiside, spoke to her, and she turned to

"You first knew me as Rayone, Miss Calhonn," he was saying genially, "Then it became necessary, by royal command, for me to be Prince Dantan. May I have the honor of introducing myself in the proper person? I am Christobal of Rapp-Thorburg, and I shall be no other than he hereafter. Dantan, at last in his proper place beside the Princess of Graustark, is to be before many days have passed."

"The Princess Candace ceases to be his sigter," volunteered the Duke of affianced wife."

had occurred in the last few moments, their youth and health. Beverly murmured her heartfelt con-All eyes turned to Baldos-the real movement, Prince Dantan-who glass in hand rose to his feet.

gentlemen, Granstark and Dawsber- cause of its foreign accent, seemed gen are entering a new era. I pledge quite different from that of any other you my honor that never again shall woman. the slightest misunderstanding exist between them. They shall go forth to their glorious destiny as one people. Your gracious ruler has seen fit to bestow her hand and affections upon an choice. There is one present, a trusted friend of your beautiful princess and lovingly called in your hearts Beverly of Graustark. Whose example more worthy for me to follow than that of the Princess Yetive? With whom could blue as my girdle stones, and men are I better share my throne and please you more than with your beloved American protege? I ask you to drink a toast to my betrothed, Beverly Calhoun, the future Princess of Dawsbergen."

Every glass was raised and the toast drunk amid ringing cheers. The mill- princess"-and he bowed the knee to her tary band crashed out the air so dear to all Americans, especially to southern hearts. Beverly was too overcome to speak.

"You all"- she exclaimed.

in the gallery. People were standing your dominions in Egypt and in in their seats half frightened and Syria?" amused, their attention attracted by the unusual scene. A portly negress, tion. totally unconscious of the sensation she was causing, her feet keeping time Wulf, who am a Norman D'Arcy and to the lively strains of music, was a Christian maid?" frantically waving a red and yellow bandanna handkerchief. It was Aunt Fanny, and in a voice that could be heard all over the banquet hall she shouted: "Good Lawd, honey, ef der ain't playin' 'Away Down South In Dixle! Hooray! Hooray!"

Hours later Beverly was running. confused and humbled, through the than she came up and checked her

slackened her pace and glanced over ber shoulder. The smiling, triumphant face of Baldos met her gaze. The upper hall was almost clear of people She was strangely frightened, distressingly diffident. Her door was not far the book of the faise prophet." away, and she would have reached it in an instant later had he not laid a restraining, compelling hand upon her arm. Then she turned to face him, her lips parted in protest. "Don't look at me in that way!" he cried imploringly. "Come, dearest, come with me. We can be alone in the nook at the end of the hall. Heavens, I am the happlest being in all the world. It has turned out as I have prayed it should."

She allowed him to lead her to the darkened nook. In her soul she was wondering why her tongue was so powerless. There were a hundred things she wanted to say to him, but now that the moment had come she was voiceless. She only could look helplessly at her tone, "what a that boat rowing

"I am to have the honor," said some him. Joy seemed to be paralyzed with-In her. It was as if she slept and one she least expected to hear utter could not be awakened. As she sank upon the cushion he dropped to his who deserved the place beside Yetive, knee before her, his hand clasping hers with a fervor that thrilled her with life. As he spoke her pulses quickened and the blood began to race

furiously. "I have won your love, Beverly, by the fairest means. There has never been an hour in which I have not been struggling for this glorious end. You gave yourself to me when you knew I could be nothing more than the humblest soldier. It was the sacrifice of love. You will forgive my presumption -my very insolence, dear one-when tell you that my soul is the forfelt I pay. It is yours through all eternity. I love you. I can give you the riches to her. Prince Dantan, to her amaze- of the world as well as the wealth of ment, led her up the entire length of the heart. The vagabond dies; your poor humble follower gives way to the supplicating prince. You would have a hundred Graustark rulers, placing lived in a cot as the guardsman's wife, You will take the royal palace in-

Beverly was herself again. The spell was gone. Her eyes swam with happiness and love. The suffering her pride labeled romance, and she was rejoic

"I hated you tonight, I thought," she eried, taking his face in her hands. "It looked as though you had played a trick on me. It was mean, dear. I couldn't help thinking that you had forward, magnificent in her royal used me as a plaything, and it-it made me furious. But it is different now. I see, oh, so plainly. And fust as I had resigned myself to the thought of spending the rest of my life in a erly turned deathly white, her figure cottage, away outside the pale of this glorious life! Oh, it is like a fairy

> "Ah, but it was not altogether a trick, dear one. There was no assurance that I could regain the thronenot until the very last. Without it I should have been the beggar instead of

the prince. We would have fived in hovel, after all. Fortune was with me. I deceived you for months, Beverlymy Beverly-but it was for the best. In defense of my honor and dignity. however, I must tell you that the princess has known for many days that I am Dantan. I told her the truth when Christobal came that day with the news. It was all well enough for me to pass myself off as a vagabond, but it would have been unpardonable to

foist him upon her as the prince." "And she has known for a week? cried Beverly in deep chagrin.

"And the whole court has known." "I alone was blind?"

"As blind as the proverb. Thank God, I won your love as a vagabond. I can treasure it as the richest of my princely possessions. You have not said that you will go to my castle with me, dear.

She leaned forward unsteadily, and he took her in his eager arms. Their lips met, and their eyes closed in the ecstasy of bliss. After a long time she lifted her lids, and her eyes of gray looked solemnly into his dark

"I have much to ask you about, many explanations to demand, sir," she said threateningly.

"By the rose that shields my heart, you shall have the truth," he laughed back at her. "I am still your servant, My enlistment is endless. I shall always serve your highness." "Your highness!" she murmured re-

flectively. Then a joyous smile of realization broke over her face. "Isn't It wonderful?" "Do you think your brothers will let

me come to Washington now?" he asked teasingly.

"It does seem different, doesn't it?" she murmured, with a strange little smile. "You will come for me?" "To the ends of the earth, your highness."

THE END.

## The Brethren By RIDER HAGGARD,

Author of "She," "King Solomon's Mines," Etc.

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looked out across the ocean easyward. To right and left, lessly, "I saw their nots." but a little behind her, like guards atgleamed bright, like swords." . tending the person of their sovereign, stood her cousins, the twin brethren, Godwin and Wulf, tall and shapely men. Godwin was still as a statue, his not look convinced, he went on, "Now hands folded over the hilt of the long for Godwin's thoughts - what were scabbarded sword, of which the point they?" was set on the ground before him, but Wulf, his brother, moved restlessly and Mizrox. "She is and long has been his at length yawned aloud. They were beautiful to look at, all three of them, Enchanted and confused over all that as they appeared in the splendor of

At the sound of that unstifled yawn gratulations to the joyous couple. The Rosamund turned her head with the orchestra had again ceased playing, slow grace which marked her every

the sun not yet down?" she asked in "Your royal highness, ladies and her rich, low voice, which, perhaps be-

"It would serve to pass the time, and now that you have finished gathering those yellow flowers which we rode so far to seek, the time is somewhat long. American gentleman, your esteemed Tell me now, what are you thinking of, prince consort. We all know how loy- you two, for I have been wondering ally the people have approved her in my dull way and am curious to learn how far I stand from truth? Rosamund, speak first." Rosamund sighed.

> "I? I was thinking of the east, where the sun shines ever, and the sens are full of strange learning"

"And women are men's slaves!" interrupted Wulf. "Still it is natural that you should think of the east who have that blood in your veins, and high blood, if all tales be true. Say, with an affectation of mockery which could not hide his earnest reverence-'say, princess, my cousin, granddaughter of Ayoub and niece of the mighty monarch Yusuf Salah-ed-din, do you There was a tremendous commotion wish to leave this pale hand and visit

"And how would they greet me there,

"The first they would forgive you, since that blood is none so ill either, and for the second why, faiths can be changed." Then it was that Godwin spoke for

the first time. "Wulf, Wulf," he said sternly, "keep

watch upon your tongue, for there are things that should not be said even as a silly jest. See you, I love my cousin balls to her room, when a swifter one here better than aught else upon the earth"-"There, at least, we agree." broke in

Wulf. "Better than aught else upon the

earth," repeated Godwin: "but, by the Holy Blood and by St. Peter, at whose shrine we are, I would kill her with my own hand before her lips kissed

"Or any of his followers." muttered Wulf to himself, but, fortunately perhaps, too low for either of his companions to hear. Aloud he said. "You understand, Rosamund; you must be careful, for Godwin ever keeps his word, and that would be but a poor end for so much birth and beauty and wisdom."

"Oh, cease mocking, Wulf!" Rosa mund answered, laying her hand lightly on the tunic that hid his shirt of mnil. "Cease meeking and pray St. Chad, the builder of this church, that no such dreadful choice may ever be forced upon you."

"Tell me." continued she, changing

ROM the sea wall on the coast it hung upon its oars as though those fround the river's mouth? Awhile ago

"Fisher folk," answered Wulf care-"Yes, but beneath them something

"Fish," said Wulf. "We are at peace in Essex." Although Rosamund did "Brother, if you would know, of the

Past also-the east and its wars."

"Which have brought us no great book," answered Wulf, "seeing that our sire was slain in them and naught of him came home again save his heart, which Hes at Stangate vonder, But, brother, there is peace at Jerusalem, as in Esser."

"Peace? Yes; but soon there will be war again. The monk Peter-he whom we saw at Stangate last Sunday and who left Syria but six months gonetold me that it was coming fast. And when it comes, brother, shall we not be there to share it, as were our grandfather, our father, our uncle and so many of our kin?"

Now it was Wulf's turn to take fire. "By Our Lady in heaven and our lady here," and he looked at Rosamund, who was watching the pair of them with quiet, thoughtful eyes, "go when you will, Godwin, and I go with you, and as our birth was one birth, so, if it is decreed, let our death be one death." And suddenly, in a voice that caused the wild fowl to rise in thunder from the Saltings beneath, Wulf shouted the old war cry that had rung on so many a field-"A D'Arcy! A D'Arcy! Meet D'Arcy, meet death!"

Godwin smiled grimly, but answered nothing; only Rosamund said:

"So, my cousins, you would be away, perhaps to return no more, and that will part us. But"-and her voice broke somewhat-"such is the woman's lot, since men like you ever love the bare sword best of all, nor should I think well of you were it otherwise. Yet, cousins, I know not why" - and she shivered a little-"it comes into my heart that heaven often answers such prayers swiftly. I am afraid-of I know not what. Well, we must be going, for we have nine miles to ride, and the dark is not so far away. But first, my cousins, come with me into this shrine and let us pray St. Peter and St. Chad to guard us.'

Then they turned and entered the old church, one of the first that ever was In Britain, rough built of Roman stone by the very hands of Chad, the Saxon saint, more than 500 years before their day. Here they knelt awhile at the rude altar and prayed, each of them in his or her own fashion, then crossed themselves and rose to seek their horses, which were tied in the shed

Now, there were two roads, or, rather, tracks, back to the hall at Steepie, one a mile or so inland that ran through the village of Bradwell, and the other, the shorter way, along the edge of the Saltings to the narrow water known as Death creek, at the head of which the traveler to Steeple must strike inland, leaving the priory of Staugate on his right. It was this latter path they chose, since at low tide the going there is good for horses, which, even in the summer, that of the inland track was not. Also they wished to be at home by supper time lest the old knight, Sir Andrew D'Arcy, the father of Rosamund and the uncle of the orphan brethren, should grow anxious and perhaps come out to seek them.

For the half of an hour or more they rode along the edge of the Saltings, for the most part in silence that was broken only by the cry of curiew and the lap of the turning tide. No buman being did they see, indeed, for this place